

HOUSE BILL 1921
By Whitson

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated,
Title 49, relative to the enactment of the "Education
Reform Act of 2001."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF
TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-5-5609 is amended in the second sentence by deleting the words, "twenty-five (25) teachers" and replacing it with the words "one hundred (100) teachers per year."

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-5-5609 is further amended by adding the following language as appropriately designated subsections:

() Each teacher who has attained national certification under the requirements of this statute shall be paid twenty-five hundred dollars (\$2,500) per year, provided that the teacher is employed as a full-time classroom teacher in a public preschool, elementary, or secondary school within Tennessee and provided that the teacher has a valid Tennessee teaching license and a valid certification by the national board of teaching standards.

() In any year, implementation of the provisions of this part shall be contingent on and subject to the funding provided for such purpose within the general appropriations act.

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-101 is amended by deleting subdivision (c)(1) in its entirety and by adding the following new subsection:

(c)(1) Schools for preschool children organized as public schools or as public school classes under the provisions of parts 1 and 2 of this chapter shall be maintained and supported from state, local and federal funds which hereafter may be appropriated specifically for preschool purposes, or from such gifts, donations or grants as may be received for preschool purposes.

SECTION 4. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-101 is amended by deleting subdivision (c)(2) in its entirety and by adding the following new subsection:

(c)(2) State funds generated through the Basic Education Program formula and local matching funds may be used for preschool purposes.

SECTION 5. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-101(c)(3) is amended by deleting the words, "the average daily attendance" and inserting the words, "the average daily membership."

SECTION 6. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 4, is amended by adding each of the following sections as a new part:

() This part shall be known and may be cited as the "Teaching Scholars Award of Excellence Program."

() The Tennessee student assistance corporation shall administer a teaching scholars award of excellence program for exemplary students who desire to enter the teaching force in Tennessee. Participation in this program is limited to college juniors, seniors, and post baccalaureate candidates admitted to teacher education programs in Tennessee and who pledge to teach in Tennessee public schools for up to six (6) years.

() The Tennessee student assistance corporation, in conjunction with the state board of education and the Tennessee higher education commission, is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations for the management of the program and the selection of recipients, taking into consideration such factors as academic record of the applicant, teacher shortage in subject areas and the balance of majority/minority representation in the teaching force. The Tennessee student assistance corporation shall provide the department of education with rosters of program participants completing teacher education programs and their areas of teaching endorsements. The department shall use these rosters for assisting in job placement and in considering waiver requests from local education agencies.

() Each program award may be up to the amount of tuition, fees, books, room and board charged at a public institution of higher education in Tennessee. Each program award shall be renewable up to two (2) times, contingent upon satisfactory academic performance. Persons receiving program awards who become public school teachers in Tennessee shall receive forgiveness of the program award balance based on two (2) years' teaching service for each year an award was made, except that if a recipient accepts employment in a geographical shortage area or in a low-performing school system or a system on warning status as defined by the commissioner or board of education, forgiveness shall be based on one and one half (1 ½) years' teaching service for each year an award was made.

() All scholarship loans shall be evidenced by notes made payable to the corporation that shall bear an interest rate of nine (9) percent per year beginning September 1 after completion of the program, or immediately after termination of the scholarship loan, whichever is earlier. This scholarship loan may be terminated by the recipient withdrawing from school or by the recipient not meeting the standards set by the corporation.

() All funds appropriated to or otherwise received by the teaching scholars award of excellence for scholarships, all funds received as repayment of scholarship loans, and all interest earned on these funds shall be placed in a revolving fund. This revolving fund shall be used for scholarship loans granted under this program.

SECTION 7. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.